

## The Town Dump - A Fine Institution

*(The following article was taken from Put It On the Front Page, published in 1960 by John and Bobbie Cutler. — Ed.)*

A town dump, as John said in one of his editorials, is a fine institution.

It's an informal meeting place where you run over glass and into people you haven't seen for weeks. It's a place where a person can give vent to so many suppressed feelings. Here Father, forced to curb his congenital urge to flick cigarette ashes on the living room rug, toss his topcoat over a chair or leaves dull razor blades on a bathroom window sill, can really let off steam. There's something grimly satisfying about heaving cartons full of mildewed shoes, bent coat hangers, twisted toothpaste containers, broken toys, empty lotion bottles and other kinds onto that inspiring mountain of rubble. This shedding-off process gives you a peculiar sense of renewal.

You are about to leave the wonderful dump when you notice a perfectly good dresser. Hmmmmmm...Some fool, too lazy to glue it together, sand it down and refinish it, probably left it there in a moment of weakness and now wishes he had it back. You glance furtively about to see if anyone is looking. It might take some explaining if that snooty neighbor across the street saw you scavenging, but of course you could hardly call it scavenging when you are retrieving a perfectly good dresser which may be an antique. Boy, will your wife be pleased when she sees the dresser. Just what the kids need for the bedroom.

Yes, a town dump is a fine institution. I just came back from the place, and, as usual, I have a feeling of renewal. It was so much fun heaving those cartons of mildewed shoes, bent coat hangers, lotion bottles — it sure does give a fellow a feeling of satisfaction. And it sure was a relief to get rid of that confounded rickety, ugly dresser I tripped over every time I tried to move around the cellar. It's stuff like that that clutters up a house, but you just try telling your wife THAT, chum.

Actually, the dresser John referred to in this editorial was the one he brought from the dump, the scavenger.

Duxbury Clipper, Wednesday, May 15, 1996

Probably no dump has received as much publicity as Duxbury's. Besides several editorials on dumps that have appeared in the *Clipper*, Everett Martson described our local dump for the readers of *Time Magazine*. "The town dump is just a nice place for people to meet, leave trash, vow eternal friendship and go their ways," he said. *Time Magazine*, commenting on his words, added:

In Duxbury's own dump, as in Lincoln's Hingham's and Wayland's, local citizens who can well afford to pay for garbage removal prefer to haul away the week's trash in their own Chevrolets, Thunderbirds, Chryslers and Volkswagens. Thus, on every Sunday morning gather old friends — and new acquaintances — who dump their stuff, then stay around to exchange gossip, renew friendships and, in a most delicate way, pick up a few worthy items discarded by their neighbors.

In such a way one Hingham widow was said to have furnished her home; a Duxbury mother found a piano that served for music lessons for her 4 children; a Lincoln housewife found a perfectly usable playpen for her baby. To these dumps, too, come service committees from the League of Women Voters and even local politicians in search of a ready-made audience. On one recent Sunday, a crowd of happy-go-dumping Hingham residents showed up with jugs of martinis and plates of hors d'oeuvres, proceeded to make a 3-martini cocktail hour to cap off the dumping chores.

But even the town dump can make for complexities. "Like everything else in this Atomic Age," muses Professor Marston, "our dump is getting organized and is not as informal as it once was. The privilege of taking things has gone." It may not be long before some cheerful martini-toting group, decked out in Sunday-go-to-dumping clothes, will be confronted by the ultimate of barriers: a sign reading NO DUMPING.

John and I have never seen a cocktail party in full sway at the town dump, but it is certainly a social center that provides newsy tidbits for "Around Town." Although we don't usually transact business at the dump, John did run into C. Colby Hewitt one Sunday morning and sold him a monthly ad for the *Clipper*. Colby is a partner of Boit, Dalton & Church of Boston.

Only rubbish — no garbage — is supposed to be thrown into our dump. John is forever warring on garbage-dumpers, whom he calls "ratophiles."